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(71) Applicant(s)
Lee Lovegrove
Bruden, Albury Road, LITTLE HADEN, Hertfordshire,
United Kingdom

(72) Inventor(s)
Lee Lovegrove

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service
Elkington and Fife
Prospect House, 8 Pembroke Road, SEVENOAKS,
Kent, TN13 1XR, United Kingdom

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(56) Documents Cited

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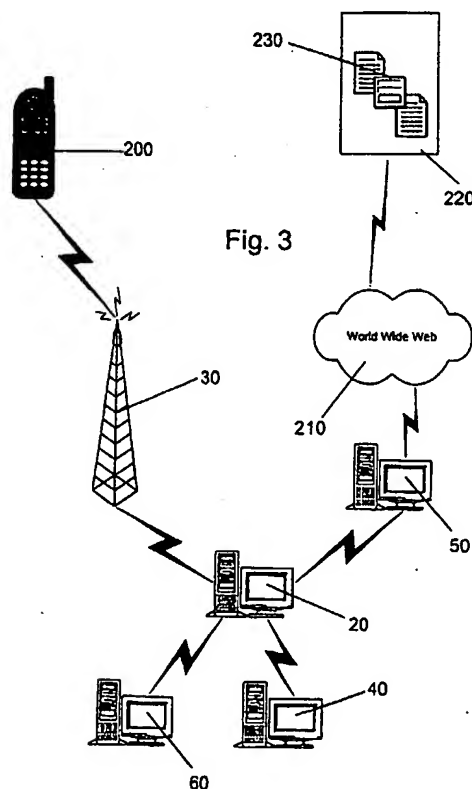
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(54) Abstract Title

Gaming system for use with mobile telephones where if the gaming system reaches a predetermined winning state it is arranged to credit the account

(57) A mobile telephone comprises a processor, a display, input means and communication means, the mobile telephone being associated with an account with a service provider accessible via the communication means, the account governing the use of the mobile telephone. The processor is arranged to display an interface corresponding to a gaming system on the display, to accept inputs via the input means to cause interaction with the gaming system, the processor being arranged to communicate with the service provider via the communication means to charge the account for access to the gaming system. If the interaction with the gaming system causes a predetermined winning state the processor is arranged to communicate with the service provider via the communications means to credit the account.



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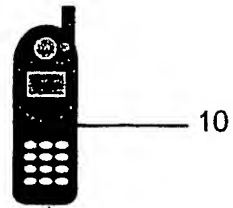
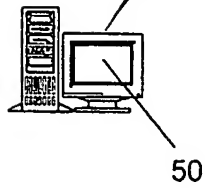
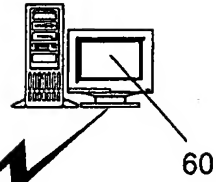
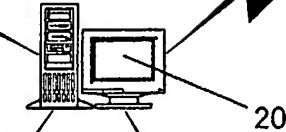


Fig. 1



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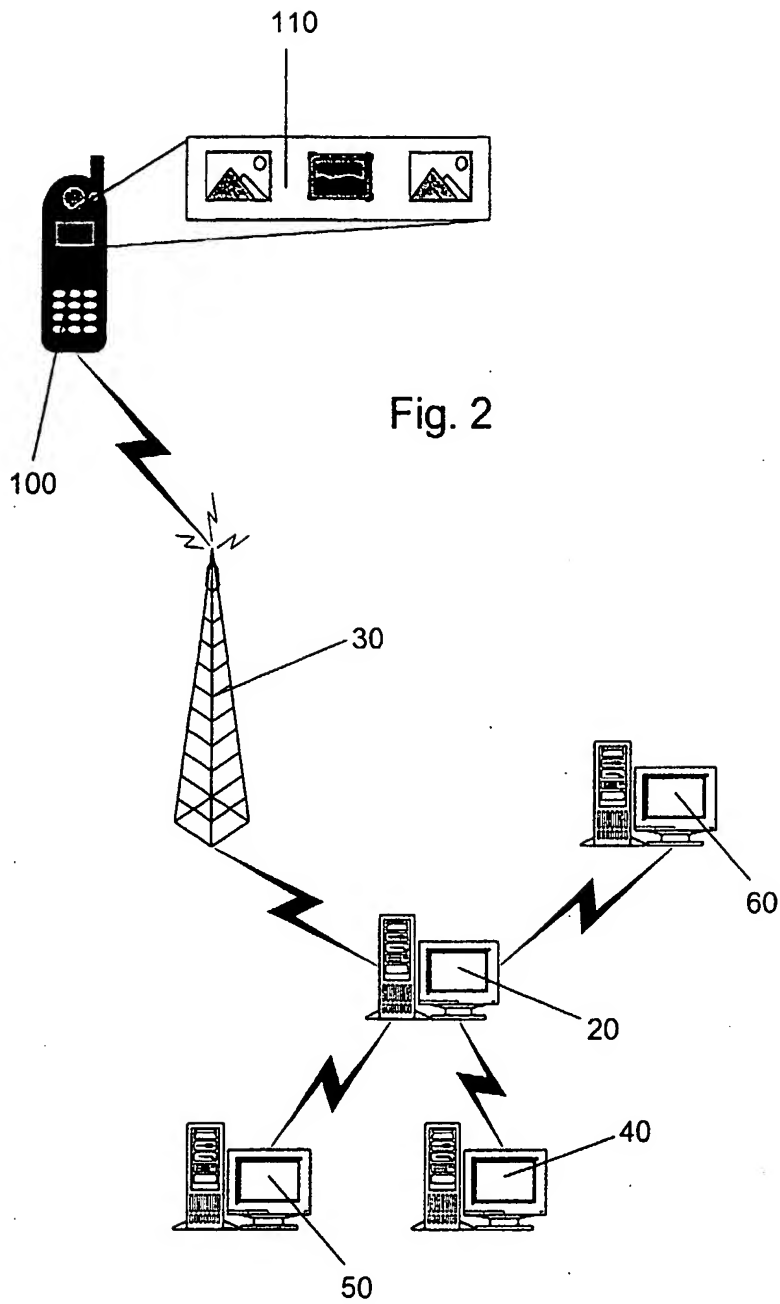


Fig. 2

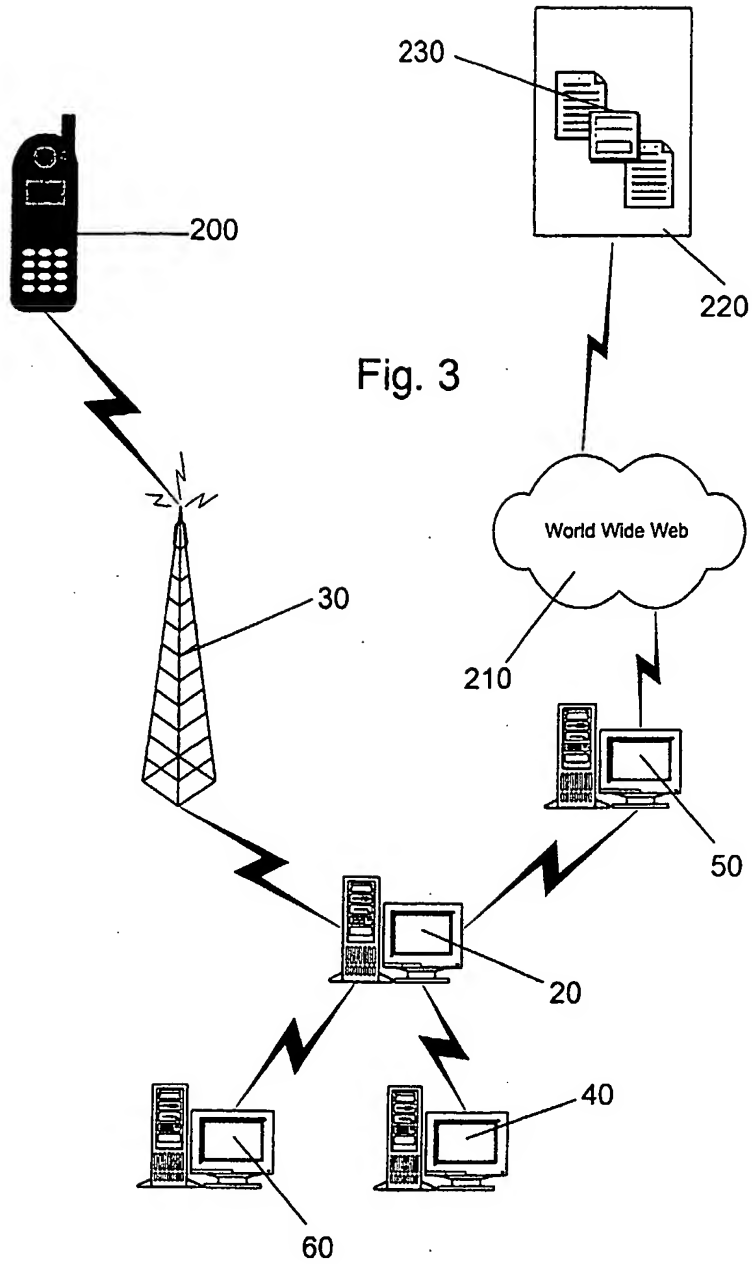


Fig. 3

Gaming System

Field of the invention

The present invention relates to a gaming system for use with mobile telephones and, in particular, pre-payment mobile telephones.

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Background to the invention

Gaming and gambling systems exist in many different variations today. Whilst there still exist traditional casinos and bookmakers in towns and cities that can be visited to play gambling games, use slot machines or place a bet, there are also an increasing number of "virtual" gambling institutions that have no, or limited, physical presence. Such virtual institutions currently offer their facilities online, such as via the Internet or World Wide Web, or via a telephone system. Communication in telephone-based systems is normally either with a telephone operator or some form of computerised voice or telephone tone recognition system. Payment at both real and virtual institutions is commonly made by credit card, on a pre-established account or, where facilities are available, cash. Each type of institution has its own associated problems. Casinos and bookmakers commonly have such bad reputations that people are unwilling to visit them. In contrast, more people would be willing to use virtual institutions if it were not for the doubts in security relating to passing credit card details over the telephone, Internet or World Wide Web.

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Statement of invention

According to one aspect of the present invention, in a mobile telephone having an account for use of the mobile telephone, there is provided a gaming system arranged to charge the account to allow access to the gaming system, wherein if the gaming system reaches a predetermined winning state it is arranged to credit the account.

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By charging and crediting the account associated with a mobile telephone, gaming systems can be implemented and/or accessed that allow gambling of money and/or credits in or charged to the account. The infrastructure already associated with pre-payment or charging of accounts is used so that stability and security is ensured and no further load is put on the mobile telephone's systems or the service provider in terms of new facilities.

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The mobile telephone may be associated with a pre-payment account, pre-payment resulting in a corresponding number of credits being associated with the account and operation of the telephone consuming the credits, in which case the gaming system may be arranged to deduct one or more credits from the account for each access and
5 to add one or more credits to the account if it reaches a predetermined winning state.

Usage of the mobile telephone may be billed at the end of each of a predetermined period, in which case the gaming system may be arranged to debit the account by a predetermined amount for each access and to credit the account by a predetermined
10 amount if it reaches a predetermined winning state.

Each access to the gaming system may comprise one play of a computerised gambling game. The computerised gambling game may be one of an arcade game, a card game, roulette, a fruit machine or a quiz game.
15

The mobile telephone may be configured to access the World Wide Web, in which case the gaming system may be arranged to access a betting World Wide Web site that is operative to accept bets, to charge the account for the bets and to credit the account for any winning bets.
20

The gaming system may be arranged to allow access after presentation of a predetermined code.

The computerised gambling game may have a free-play mode in which plays of the gambling game are free but nothing is credited to the account if a predetermined
25 winning state is reached and a gambling mode in which plays of the gambling game are charged to the account and wins are credited to the account, wherein transition between the free-play mode and the gambling mode is in dependence on presentation of a predetermined code.

30 The predetermined code may be presented by a service provider communicating it to the mobile telephone. Alternatively, the predetermined code may be presented by being input into the mobile telephone.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a mobile telephone comprising a processor, a display, input means and communication means, the mobile telephone being associated with an account with a service provider accessible via the communication means, the account governing the use of the mobile
5 telephone, wherein the processor is arranged to display an interface corresponding to a gaming system on the display, to accept inputs via the input means to cause interaction with the gaming system, the processor being arranged to communicate with the service provider via the communications means to charge the account for access to the gaming system, wherein if the interaction with the gaming system causes
10 a predetermined winning state the processor is arranged to communicate with the service provider via the communications means to credit the account.

Brief description of the drawings

An example of the present invention will now be described in detail with reference to
15 the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of a telecommunications system;

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of a remote gaming system according to one example of the present invention; and,

Figure 3 is a schematic diagram of a remote gaming system according to another
20 example of the present invention.

Detailed description

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of a telecommunications system suitable to host a gaming system according to the present invention. A mobile telephone 10 owned by a
25 user is linked to a telecommunications provider 20 via a mobile telecommunications system 30, typically a GSM cell based system. In the simplest case, all communications from the mobile telephone 10 are relayed via the telecommunications provider 20. If the user wished to send an SMS (Simple Messaging System) message or to access the Internet via WAP (Wireless Application Protocol), GPRS (General
30 Packet Radio Service) or similar, he or she would initially communicate using the mobile telephone 10 with the telecommunications provider 20, who would in turn route the communications traffic to an appropriate SMS server 40, WAP server 50 or similar.

A suitable accounting system 60 is linked to the telecommunications provider 20. The accounting system 60 is responsible for recording the usage of the mobile telephone 10 so that a bill can be periodically generated to charge the user. Typically, the duration of each use will be recorded along with the type of usage (mobile to landline, mobile to mobile, WAP, SMS, etc.) and the overall charge. On a standard mobile telephone account, where usage is paid for at the end of a predetermined period, the accounting system 60 records the data and, at the end of the predetermined period, calculates the bill in dependence on any free calls or other discounts allocated to that account.

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In pre-payment (also known as pay-as-you-go) mobile telephone accounts, the account must be credited with funds, also referred to as credits, before the telephone can be used. This is typically done by purchasing a call card and submitting the details of the call card to the accounting system 60, either via the mobile telephone or via some other route such as a call from a landline or via a dedicated terminal in a shop or via the Internet. Alternatively, credits can be purchased and charged to a credit card. In all of these cases there are well known, established, secure, systems allowing accounts to be credited. When a mobile telephone associated with a pre-payment account is switched on or used, communication is established with the accounting system 60 to determine whether there are sufficient credits recorded in the account for the telephone to be used. Usage of the telephone is deducted from the available credits and if the usage cost is greater than the available credits the particular use is blocked until further credits are applied to the account.

25 Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of a remote gaming system according to one example of the present invention. A pre-payment mobile telephone 100 is connected to a communications system such as that described with reference to Figure 1. An electronic version of a fruit machine type game 110 can be played on the mobile telephone 100. To play the game a number of credits must be allocated by the user.

30 These credits correspond to pre-payment credits held by the accounting system 60 for the mobile telephone's account. When the game 110 is started, the user is prompted to allocate a number of credits. This is crosschecked with the accounting system 60 and, if sufficient credits are available, the credits are deducted from the accounting system 60 and activate the fruit machine 110 for a predetermined number of plays. If

there are insufficient credits available, the user is prompted to re-select the amount he or she wishes to allocate. In each play, a random sequence of symbols from a predetermined set is displayed on the mobile telephone 100. Play is controlled via the mobile telephone data entry system (keyboard, cursor, stylus entry etc.) and
5 corresponds to that in known fruit machine type games. Any wins on the fruit machine 110 are converted into credits and added to pre-payment credits held by the accounting system 60.

The user may be given the opportunity to convert wins into more plays on the game
10 110. Other games could also be enabled in the above manner to allow credits to be gambled. Whilst it is envisaged that these games would be electronic gambling type games such as card games or roulette, other game types such as quiz games and arcade games could also be modified in a similar manner. The games may come as part of the operating system of the mobile telephone 100 or may be added by
15 downloading or similar. A code may be required to permit access to the games. Alternatively, the games may operate in a free-play mode without requiring credits to play and without giving credits when a game is won. A code may be required to change the games from free-play mode to allow gambling. Alternatively, the enabling of a mobile telephone to allow gambling may be required to be made by the
20 telecommunications provider 20. Known advances in remote gaming such as obtaining seeds for random number generation for the games from a secure server via the telecommunications system 30 could also be used. In the event that a mobile telephone is made available that stores its own credits without needing an account, the present invention could easily be adapted to operate locally within the mobile
25 telephone.

Figure 3 is a schematic diagram of a remote gaming system according to another example of the present invention. A mobile telephone 200 is associated with a standard mobile telephone account that is billed monthly by the accounting system 60
30 of a telecommunications provider. The mobile telephone 200 is enabled to access the World Wide Web 210 via a WAP server 50.

On accessing the World Wide Web 210, the user is able to browse a Web site 220 of a bookmaker. An interface 230 on the Web site 220 allows the user to select one of a

predetermined number of events and to place a bet. The interface 230 then prompts the user to select a payment mechanism. In addition to standard payment mechanisms such as payment by credit card, the user is offered the opportunity to debit his or her mobile telephone account. If this option is selected, the Web site 220 communicates with the accounting system 60 to arrange debiting of the appropriate account. If the bet is subsequently successful, the Web site 220 communicates with the accounting system 60 to credit the account with the amount won. The Web site 220 may be configured to communicate the results of the bet to the user via the mobile telephone 200.

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The reader will appreciate that although the examples discussed above have been directed to specific mobile telephone account types, the examples and account types are interchangeable. Indeed, the present invention is applicable to any mobile telephone account that could be debited and credited.

15

Claims

1. In a mobile telephone having an account for use of the mobile telephone, a
5 gaming system is arranged to charge the account to allow access to the gaming system, wherein if the gaming system reaches a predetermined winning state it is arranged to credit the account.
2. A gaming system according to claim 1, in which the mobile telephone is
10 associated with a pre-payment account, pre-payment resulting in a corresponding number of credits being associated with the account and operation of the telephone consuming the credits, wherein the gaming system is arranged to deduct one or more credits from the account for each access and to add one or more credits to the account if it reaches a predetermined winning state.
3. A gaming system according to claim 1, in which usage of the mobile
15 telephone is billed at the end of each of a predetermined period, wherein the gaming system is arranged to debit the account by a predetermined amount for each access and to credit the account by a predetermined amount if it reaches a predetermined
20 winning state.
4. A gaming system according to claim 1, 2 or 3, in which each access to the gaming system comprises one play of a computerised gambling game.
5. A gaming system according to claim 4, in which the computerised gambling
25 game comprises a selected one of an arcade game, a card game, roulette, a fruit machine or a quiz game.
6. A gaming system according to claim 1, 2 or 3, in which the mobile telephone
30 is configured to access the World Wide Web, wherein the gaming system is arranged to access a betting World Wide Web site that is operative to accept bets, to charge the account for the bets and to credit the account for any winning bets.

7. A gaming system according to any preceding claim, in which the gaming system is arranged to allow access after presentation of a predetermined code.

8. A gaming system according to claim 4 or 5, in which the computerised gambling game has a free-play mode in which plays of the gambling game are free but nothing is credited to the account if a predetermined winning state is reached and a gambling mode in which plays of the gambling game are charged to the account and wins are credited to the account, wherein transition between the free-play mode and the gambling mode is in dependence on presentation of a predetermined code.

9. A gaming system according to claim 7 or 8, in which the predetermined code is presented by a service provider communicating it to the mobile telephone.

10. A gaming system according to claim 7 or 8, in which the predetermined code is presented by being input into the mobile telephone.

11. A mobile telephone comprising a processor, a display, input means and communication means, the mobile telephone being associated with an account with a service provider accessible via the communication means, the account governing the use of the mobile telephone, wherein the processor is arranged to display an interface corresponding to a gaming system on the display, to accept inputs via the input means to cause interaction with the gaming system, the processor being arranged to communicate with the service provider via the communications means to charge the account for access to the gaming system, wherein if the interaction with the gaming system causes a predetermined winning state the processor is arranged to communicate with the service provider via the communications means to credit the account.

12. A gaming system as herein described, with reference to the accompanying drawings.

13. A mobile telephone as herein described, with reference to the accompanying drawings.



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Claims searched: 1-10

Examiner: Hannah Sylvester
Date of search: 7 July 2001

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

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Int Cl (Ed.7): G06F 19/00, 13/00, 17/60, 15/22, A63F 0/00, 3/08, 9/22, 9/24, G07F 5/18, 7/00, 7/08, 7/10, 17/32, G07C 13/00, 15/00, H04M 3/42, 11/06, 15/00, 17/00, H04Q 7/22

Other: Online: WPI EPODOC JAPIO

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	EP0032410A (DE BRUYN)	At least: 1,2,4 and 5
X	JP11312206A (NEC)	
A	US5811772A (SCOTCH TWIST)	At least: 1
A	US5365575 (FIRST DATA)	
X	WO0052609A (PISTORIUS)	
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